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Department of State

INFO: BRASILIA, RIO DE JANEIRO

Amconsul São Paulo

August 25, 1969

Security Secretary Discusses Arson and Terrorism

Sao Paulo's 801

"Begin Unclassified"

1. In a press interview on August 13 São Paulo's outgoing State Secretary for Public Security, Hely Lopes Meirelles, discussed with surprising frankness the recent fires at São Paulo television stations and the problem of terrorism in general. A summary of his remarks as reported in the press follows:

2. Radio Television Fires. Meirelles said he believed the fires had been set by someone working within the television stations. He left open the possibility that these same people could be linked to terrorist groups; however, he implied that these fires were not acts by terrorists.

3. Numbers of Terrorist Groups in Sao Paulo. He named the following groups as being active in São Paulo: (1) the Vanguarda Popular Revolucionaria (VPR)--which has links to Marighella wing (ala Marighella) and Red Wing (ala Vermelha), and helps these action groups by providing personnel; (2) MNR--Movimento Nacional Revolucionario; (3) FLB--Frente de Libertação Brasileira; (4) FLN--Frente de Libertação Nacional; (5) POLOP--Politica Operaria; (6) PCB--Partido Comunista do Brasil; (7) AP--Ação Popular; and (8) MER--Movimento Estudantil Revolucionario. In addition, there had been the right-wing group of Sabado Dinotos (AKA Aladino Felix) which carried out a number of acts of terrorism, including bombings and a bank robbery. This group had been dismantled and nearly all of its people arrested. (Comment: Sabado Dinotos was released from prison three days after Institutional Act No. 5, and immediately disappeared).

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4. Numbers of Persons and Ideological Orientation. Professor Meirelles said the number of militants and the potential fire-power of these groups was small. As for their ideology, they followed the theories and teachings of Marx, Lenin, and Mao Tsé-Tung. Their objective was to take power through armed battle and implant Communism. The groups' acts could be divided into logistical action and terrorist action. In the first category were included bank robberies, thefts of dynamite, ammunition, thefts of cars, etc. These logistical actions provided support for the real terrorist attempts, such as the explosion of bombs in Consulates, military headquarters, newspaper buildings and homes of officials, and the murder of the American officer, Captain Chandler.

5. Financial and Material Loss. The material damage and losses from bank robberies in Sao Paulo were approximately NCr\$2,500,000 (about U.S. \$609,750).

6. Number of Deaths. The terrorists were responsible for the deaths of one soldier of the Army, four soldiers of the Força Publica, one guarda civil policeman and two civilians. Groups recognized as terrorists have carried out approximately 60 bank robberies in the state of São Paulo.

7. Groups Captured. Authorities had been successful in capturing the group of Sabado Dinotos in August and September 1968. They had almost completely broken up the VPR. Some people belonging to the "ala Marighella" and "ala Vermelha" had been arrested and the activities of auxiliary groups were being observed. The number of arrests totaled about 150.

8. Urban Terrorism. According to Professor Meirelles, at present terrorism is purely urban. There are no indications of a possible rural guerrilla activity.

9. Foreign Influence. There was some evidence that foreign countries had influenced the terrorists; for example, some leftists had had courses of politicalization and preparation for guerrilla activities in China, Cuba, and Russia. However, he added that one could not say categorically that there was external direction because the countries cited above had limited themselves to preparing people psychologically. The terrorists came from all social classes, with the middle-class predominating.

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